

# Is My Baby Getting Enough

## How often should my baby eat?

Many moms wonder how often they should feed their babies. Babies should eat 8-12 times per day. Babies do not have a fixed schedule or hour of when they want to eat; the timing of their feeding may be different every day. Some babies breastfeed every 1-3 hours day and night; others breastfeed every hour for 3-5 feedings then sleep 3-4 hours in between. Every baby is different. Therefore, it is important to watch your baby and not the clock. Remember that sometimes a sleepy baby will not show that they are hungry; you will need to wake him to breastfeed. During the first 4-6 weeks, you will want to wake a baby if they sleep longer than 4 hours. It is important that he eats at least 8 times in 24 hours.

## Signs of Hunger

Babies show different ways that they are hungry. Babies can show multiple ways that they are hungry; see Baby Behaviors on our website. These signs include squirming, wiggling, smack lips, sucking on hands, clinched fists close to their body. The last hunger sign is when baby begins to cry and fuss. It is a good idea to position and latch your baby at the earliest signs of hunger to make breastfeeding a little easier.

## How do I know when my baby is full?

Your baby will let you know when he is done eating. Watch your baby and not the clock. Feedings can vary in length. A feeding can last as short as 5-10 minutes and as long as an hour. Your baby may want a snack or a big meal. When your baby stops suckling and swallowing, burp him and offer the second breast. If he breastfeed poorly or for a short amount of time, put him back to the first breast prior to offering the second breast. Sometimes babies will only take one breast and that is okay. Other ways that babies show that they are full is that they will fall off the breast, your baby's hands will be open, and your baby will be content. Remember that babies cry for many reasons and hunger is one of many possibilities; to learn more about your baby's behavior on our website.

## How do you know if your baby is getting enough?

- Baby is gaining weight. Check out our website on normal growth patterns.
- Baby is producing dirty and wet diapers. Check out our website for normal diaper output.
- Baby is breastfeeding 8-12 times per day
- Do you hear your baby swallowing at the breast?
- Your breasts feel firm or full prior to feeding and feel soft after the feeding. If you are experiencing pain, call your health care provider and/or The 24 Hour Breastfeeding Hotline 1-800-833-4642.
- Your baby will be content after feeds.

(Adapted from Breastfeeding: Keep It Simple by Amy Spangler)



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